

PRESS RELEASE

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on the International Criminal Court**

The European Union expresses its deep appreciation for the successful completion of the Conference for the establishment of the International Criminal Court which is an achievement of historical dimensions sending a signal that the world can be made a safer and more just place to live in.

The European Union fully endorses the outcome of the Rome Conference as reflected in the statute adopted by an overwhelming majority of participating states on 17 July 1998. Although not all aspirations could be fully accommodated, this statute lays the foundation for an effective and credible Court as an institution to fight impunity of the most heinous crimes and to deter their commission. The European Union is pleased that complicated and difficult issues such as the definition of crimes, the principle of complementarity, the scope of jurisdiction, the independence of the prosecutor, and the relationship with the United Nations were resolved in a satisfactory manner acceptable to all EU Member States.

The European Union is well aware that not all tasks to make the Court a reality have been accomplished yet. In particular, the Preparatory Commission has still to carry out its work as set out in the statute such as the elaboration of the rules of procedure and evidence. The European Union stands ready to do its utmost to contribute to the accomplishment of this task. The European Union expresses the hope that the required number of sixty ratifications will be reached soon in order for the court to become operative.

The European Union expresses its particular gratitude to Philippe Kirsch for his outstanding contribution to the success of the Rome Conference and would also like to thank the host country Italy for its generous hospitality and for paving the way for the positive outcome of the Conference.